

REMARKS

Claims 22, 32, and 33 have been canceled by this Amendment. A new independent claim 34 has been added. Claims 14 -21, 23 – 31, and 34 are currently pending in the present application.

In the Office Action, claims 14-17, 25-29, 32, and 33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 (b) as being anticipated by Choi US Patent No. 6,408,634. Also, in the Office Action, claims 18-21, 23-24, and 30-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Choi US Patent No. 6,408,634 in view of various secondary references: Yin et al US Patent Application 2003/0202337; Hiroaka et al US Patent No. 6,405,544; Burnett US Patent No. 6,295,004; Moseley et al US Patent No. 5,099,193; and Takayanagi US Patent No. 6,970,726. Additionally, in the Office Action, claim 22 is objected to but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

With regard to the indication in the Office Action that claim 22 would be allowed if properly rewritten, Applicants have presented the subject matter of claim 22 as a new independent claim 34.

Favorable reconsideration of claims 14 -21 and 23 – 31 is respectfully requested in view of the cancellation of claims 32 and 33 and the following comments.

Independent claim 14 of the present application recites an electric appliance having a plurality of operating elements and a control logic unit coupled to the operating elements. Each operating element is actuatable by a user in an actuatable state and not actuatable by the user in a non-actuatable state and each operating element includes a respective status display device. The control logic unit of the electric appliance recited in independent claim 14 of the present application is

configured to: (a) detect a user input, (b) change an operating state of the electrical appliance according to the user input, and (c) activate the status display device of each operating element that is in an actuatable state and deactivate the status display device of each operating element that is in a non-actuatable state in response to a change in the electrical appliance from a first operating state to a second operating state.

Choi US Patent No. 6,408,634 discloses a control unit 306 for a refrigeration system. The control unit 306 includes a series of pushbutton switches for user input of operating parameters for refrigerator unit 100 as well as digital readouts for displaying the operating temperatures of the two compartments. The control unit 306 includes a first digital display area 402 that displays the temperature setting for a refrigerator compartment, and a second digital display area 404 that displays the temperature setting for a freezer compartment. These displays are visible through the top panel 106 through a transparent window 105 of glass or plastic that is incorporated into the top panel. The control unit 306 includes several pushbutton controls that allow the user to input operating characteristics for the refrigerator. A first on/off switch 410 is provided for the refrigerator compartment, and second on/off switch 412 is provided for the freezer compartment. A temperature setting button 414 is provided for either of the two compartments. When the user desires to set the temperature of either of the compartments, he or she presses this button. The temperature that the compartment is to run is then programmed in using the high 416 or low 418 buttons. Pressing the high button 416 raises the pre-set operating temperature, and pressing the low button 418 lowers the pre-set operating temperature. The actual operating temperature of the compartments is displayed in display areas 402 and 404. The actual programming steps to set or reset the operating temperatures for the compartments can be configured depending upon the actual user's needs and implementation. However, in one embodiment, the following steps are performed. When a particular compartment is turned on, the red light above the on/off switch for that compartment is illuminated. In order to set the temperature

in a particular compartment, the temperature set pushbutton switch 414 is pressed. The indicator light for the compartment will blink to indicate that the desired temperature can be entered. This is done by using the high and low buttons 416 and 418. During normal operation, it may take one to two hours for the temperature to drop to the desired setting.

Yin et al US Patent Application 2003/0202337 discloses keys for use in low light conditions and discloses a light sensitive phosphorescent material to illuminate a key. An open region 154 allows a phosphorescent material to be more rapidly charged. An indicia 136 is visible because the keys emit visible light (or 'glow in the dark') from a region in the shape of the indicia so long as the phosphorescent material was previously exposed to light energy.

Hiroaka et al US Patent No. 6,405,544 discloses a temperature display that indicates a current temperature state of a chamber using a black dot. A switch portion 7b including a button for selecting a refrigerator chamber subjected to a temperature control and 'a button for controlling the temperature inside the selected chamber having prints of upward and downward arrows. A user operates a chamber subjected to quick cooling through the switch portion 7b - i.e., the switch for selecting the chamber subjected to quick cooling or a chamber subjected to temperature control through the switch for selecting the chamber subjected to temperature control.

Burnett US Patent No. 6,295,004 discloses an appliance warning light device and discloses a visible hazard warning device which emits light from a surface of an appliance or its open front door to advise persons working in the vicinity of the appliance that the front door is open and represents an accident hazard to lower legs.

Moseley et al US Patent No. 5,099,193 discloses a capacitive proximity sensor.

Takayanagi US Patent No. 6,970,726 discloses a power consumption reduction method via which power consumption is minimized by automatically turning off the backlight when neither an input operation nor an interruption occurs for a predetermined period of time or automatically stopping a setting operation when no input operation is done during the setting operation and shifting to a power saving standby state.

In the Office Action, it is asserted that the electric appliance of Choi US Patent No. 6,408,634 is operable, in the language of claim 14 of the present application, to “activate the status display device of each operating element that is in an actuatable state and deactivate the status display device of each operating element that is in a non-actuatable state in response to a change in the electrical appliance from a first operating state to a second operating state.” Specifically, according to the Office Action, when the “red light” – that is, the red light above the on/off switch 410 (for the refrigerator compartment of Choi US Patent No. 6,408,634), or the red light above second on/off switch 412 (for the freezer compartment) - is blinking, this blinking red indicator light represents an “actuable state.” The Office Action continues in noting that the “non-actuable state” is interpreted as either no light to indicate that a particular refrigerator or freezer compartment is not turned on or no blinking light to indicate that a user cannot program the desired temperature. However, it is noted that each “red light” – that is, the red light above the on/off switch 410 (for the refrigerator compartment of Choi US Patent No. 6,408,634), or the red light above second on/off switch 412 (for the freezer compartment) – is an indicator that the respective associated refrigerator or freezer compartment is turned on. Specifically, when a user presses the on/off switch 410 to turn on the refrigerator compartment, the red light above the on/off switch 410 changes from a non-illuminated (non-blinking) condition into an illuminated (blinking) condition to thus indicate that the refrigerator compartment is now turned on and when a user presses the on/off switch 412 to turn on the freezer compartment, the red light above the on/off switch 412 changes from a non-illuminated (non-blinking) condition into an illuminated (blinking)

condition to thus indicate that the freezer compartment is now turned on. A user sets a desired temperature for a compartment via pressing of the temperature setting button 414.

Applicants submit, however, that Choi US Patent No. 6,408,634 does not teach or disclose the electric appliance recited in independent claim 14 of the present application which includes a control unit operable to "activate the status display device of each operating element that is in an actuatable state and deactivate the status display device of each operating element that is in a non-actuatable state in response to a change in the electrical appliance from a first operating state to a second operating state." For example, it can clearly be seen that Choi US Patent No. 6,408,634 does not teach or disclose a control unit or any structure that deactivates the status display device of each operating element that is in a non-actuatable state in response to a change in the electrical appliance from a first operating state to a second operating state. In the Choi US Patent No. 6,408,634 arrangement, neither the red light above the on/off switch 410 (for the refrigerator compartment) nor the red light above second on/off switch 412 (for the freezer compartment) is "deactivated" when a temperature setting operation is being performed by a user to set the temperature of the other respective compartment. Instead, the red light associated with the respective associated refrigerator or freezer compartment continues to blink while the temperature setting is being performed for the other compartment – there is simply no control unit or other structure that deactivates this red light (deactivation of the red light can be effected only by a manual operation whereby a user presses the respective on/off switch 410 or on/off switch 412).

Additionally, none of the other cited references Yin et al US Patent Application 2003/0202337, Hiroaka et al US Patent No. 6,405,544, Burnett US Patent No. 6,295,004, Moseley et al US Patent No. 5,099,193, Takayanagi US Patent No. 6,970,726 cure the deficiencies of Choi US Patent No. 6,408,634 discussed above.

For example, none of these other cited references teach or suggest a plurality of operating elements that each include a respective status display device which is activated when the operating element is in an actuatable state and deactivated when the operating element is in a non-actuatable state. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set out above, independent Claim 14 is allowable and dependent Claims 15-25, which depend from Claim 14, are also allowable. Also, for at least the reasons set out above with respect to claim 14, it is submitted that independent Claim 26 is allowable and that dependent Claims 27-31, which depend from Claim 26, are also allowable.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, entry of the present Amendment and allowance of claims 14 -21, 23 – 31, and 34 are respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this Amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned. If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made.

Respectfully submitted



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